

Notes from the March 16, 2011 Meeting of the P20 Council's
College and Career Readiness Committee
1 p.m. to 3 p.m. at DeVry, Inc.

The meeting was called to order by the co-chairs. They reported that a presentation on the new Pathways to Prosperity report by Bill Symonds was very compelling. The report is available on the P20 website.

The committee is preparing its report to be given at the April 27 P20 Council meeting. The slides prepared by the subgroup were presented for discussion. The committee would like to edit the goal for the P20 Council to read: **GOAL: 60% of all Illinois residents have a high quality accredited or recognized academic degree and/or industry-recognized certificates or credential by 2025.**

The committee's mission statement was tweaked to read: "The vision of the *P20 Committee on College and Career Readiness* is to understand what our education system must do in order to develop individuals capable of solving our society's problems and growing our economies. Although rooted in solid academic performance, true success goes beyond the formal educational experience to social, civic, and professional engagement with the wider community. When we look at the broad spectrum of skills this involves, we are better prepared to reform our educational systems to meet society's needs."

It was noted that college readiness and career readiness are not the same. Career readiness encompasses technical skills and stackable credentials. The definition used by Chicago Public Schools for Career and Technical Education was suggested, or the ACTE. It should not be dumbed down. The definition of employability skills on the slide needs to be pumped up, and include communication skills. Generally, when assessing student achievement and readiness, the "soft skills" need to be taught and assessed as well as reading and math.

College completion - SB 1773 (performance metrics) could help to address college completion concerns.

The Illinois Community College Board, Illinois Board of Higher Education and Illinois State Board of Education will be hosting eight regional workshops in April focused on the Common Core College Readiness Standards and curriculum alignment throughout Illinois. The workshops will inform the field on the College Readiness Standards and assist the field on curriculum alignment. Julie Smith noted that Dr. David Conley and his staff at the Educational Policy Improvement Center (EPIC) at the University of Oregon will conduct the workshops and will provide specific strategies to increase college readiness and alignment between high school and college.

There was discussion of how the career maps are just as relevant for liberal arts majors as for technical or STEM careers. The committee report will encompass a broader approach than the Pathways report, as it will include higher education as well as career and technical preparation.

Jeff Mays asked whether the PARCC assessment being constructed to measure the Common Core standards would be solely focused on academics. Academic knowledge is now measured by the ACT test, employability by Work Keys, or Work Net, or another instrument. The committee will find out the answer to that question. The PARCC test is still under construction.

The committee would like to see more action recommendations to address the achievement gap and other problems identified in the slides. Suggestion to break out rural/poverty. Important to address diversity, perhaps without ethnic indicators. Immigrants or language learners could be included. The Public Agenda report has a map of Illinois showing educational attainment (IERC does, too.) There could be more information about middle skill jobs.

It was noted that instruction is not the same as curriculum. Teaching standards and the teaching workforce are critical for good student outcomes. Especially with dual enrollment courses, it is important to have vertical alignment of instruction as well as the content of the courses, and track how well the students do after the courses are taken. The PISA recommendations include much discussion of the need to attract people to the teaching profession, and provide support and professional development. It is critical to include training in literacy, diversity sensitivity, and career path counseling for all “regular academic” teachers as well as for CTE teachers and counselors. Need to share this insight with the teacher/leadership committee.

For both college and career paths, the gateway courses must be articulated with later courses and must be rigorous.

The transitional plans that are currently developed for special ed students leaving school could be a model for similar plans for all high school students.

The Illinois Manufacturers Association, representing 4,000 of the 20,000 manufacturers in Illinois, presented slides for the committee.

Illinois manufacturing contributes 13% of Illinois GDP, equivalent to the 18th largest economy in the world. As baby boomers retire, the sector will need another 30,000 skilled workers each year. The average salary and benefits for manufacturing workers is \$77,000. A new hire can cost \$1 million to an employer over a 20-year work life, so finding the right person is critical. The IMA would like to have the 3rd ACT Work Keys test administered to all high school students, which could provide a career readiness certificate that would be useful for employers.

In addition, there should be more opportunities for students to “earn while you learn” or apprenticeships. An example is the Illinois Central College arrangement with Caterpillar. The National Association of Manufacturers has a certification system that is nationally portable, and data-based. It doesn’t replace the high school diploma, but creates a stackable credential.

Some barriers to these goals were noted by committee members: state law restricts access for students under 17 to manufacturing floors; school schedules do not dovetail with plant shifts that run 7-3:30.

Illinois used to have a tax credit to support employers who took on interns. We need to re-think how we offer incentives to industry to create opportunities - internships, job shadowing.